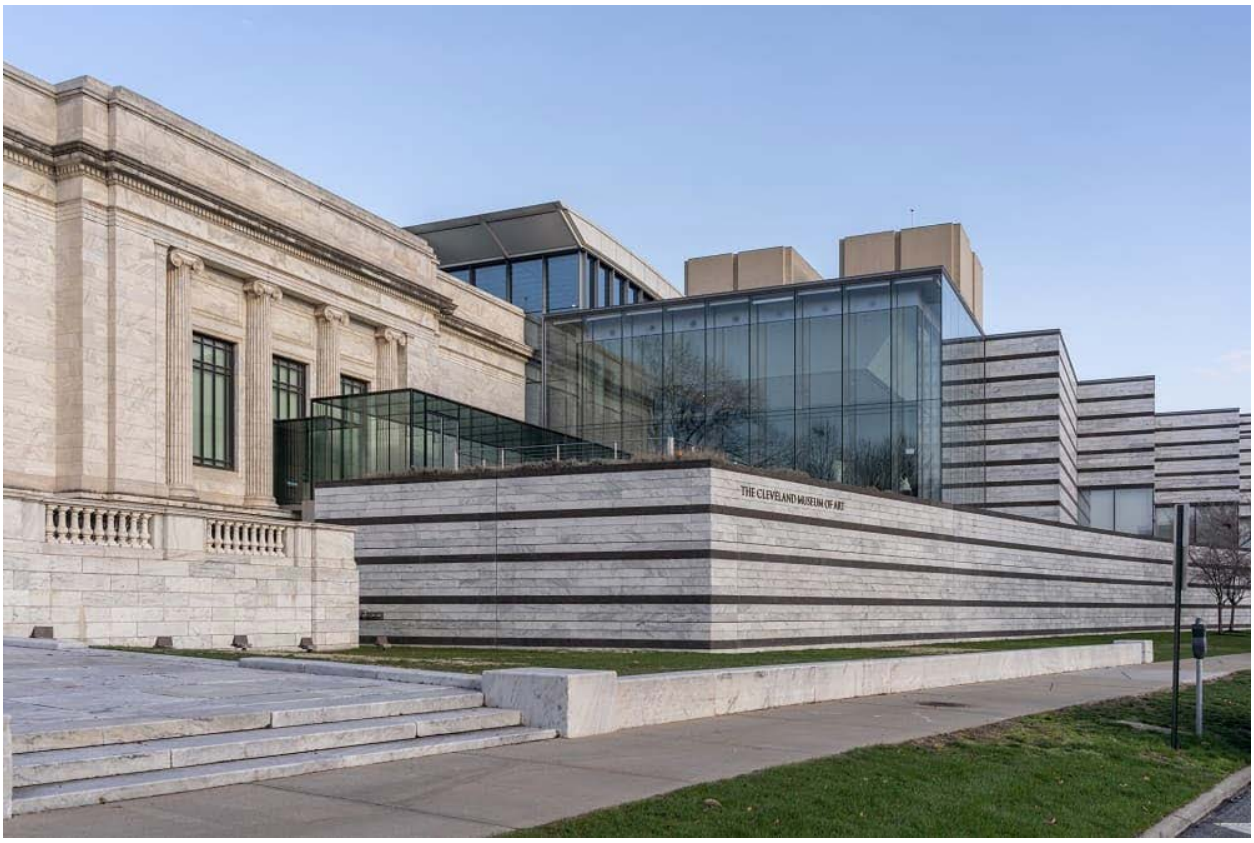
The Cleveland Museum of Art Presents the Exhibition A Splendid Land: Paintings from Royal Udaipur

Thursday June 8, 2023



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Dazzling paintings on paper and cloth, many on view for the first time ever, give insight into life in early modern South Asia

PRESS KIT

CLEVELAND (June 8, 2023)—During the 1700s, Udaipur, a royal capital in northwest India, became a destination for the entertainment of political leaders, where its rulers built diplomatic relationships and demonstrated the righteous authority of the court. The kings commissioned a new kind of painting: large-scale depictions of actual events that convey the mood (*bhava*) of the city's palaces, lakes, temples, and mountains. Fifty dazzling works on paper and cloth—many on public view for the first time and more than half from the City Palace Museum, Udaipur—invite us to experiencethis endlessly fascinating kingdom in the

Cleveland Museum of Art's newest exhibition,*A Splendid Land: Paintings from Royal Udaipur*.

On view June 11 throughSeptember 10, 2023, in the Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation Gallery, the exhibition reveals how artists elicited emotions, depicted scenes through time, celebrated water resources, and fostered personal bonds over some two hundred years in the rapidly changing political and cultural landscapes of early modern South Asia.

"This spectacular show belies the very notion of the 'Indian miniature' as an art form that is small in scale," said CMA Director and President William M. Griswold. "Many of the paintings on view are astonishingly large, vividly evoking the magnificent palaces and vast landscapes that they depict."

Emphasizing lived experience, *A Splendid Land: Paintings from Royal Udaipur* also explores how painters creatively manipulated architectural space, mapped terrains, and triggered memories to foster political and personal attachments to the land. The visitor travels from island pleasure palaces to the sprawling City Palace, into the city streets, and to the hunting grounds beyond the city. Audiences will experience the mood of the monsoons and witness how the rulers, through their piety, brought heaven to earth in Udaipur.

This exhibition has been cocurated by Debra Diamond, the Elizabeth Moynihan Curator for South Asian and Southeast Asian Art at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art, and Dipti Khera, associate professor, Department of Art History and Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.

Exhibition Catalogue

A beautifully illustrated 400-page catalogue accompanies *A Splendid Land: Paintings from Royal Udaipur* and features more than 100 full-color illustrations. The essays aim to address how and why artists used paintings to elicit a sensory experience, express emotion, and depict cultural landscapes in South Asia. Created over a period of two hundred years, extending from Mughal to colonial India, many of the works have never been published or exhibited in the United States. By examining social networks, ecological relations, and pleasurable pursuits, as well as drawing upon previously untranslated sources and engaging with the history of the senses, the catalogue opens early modern art history to new interpretative possibilities.

A Splendid Land: Paintings from Royal Udaipur is organized by the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art, in collaboration with the City Palace Museum, Udaipur, administered by the Maharana of Mewar Charitable Foundation.

The National Museum of Asian Art gratefully acknowledges support from exhibition cochairs Farhad and Mary Ebrahimi and Dr. Vijay and Ms. Nanda Anand, along with members of the *A Splendid Land: Paintings from Royal Udaipur* Leadership Council.

The Cleveland Museum of Art's presentation of *A Splendid Land: Paintings from Royal Udaipur* is made possible with principal support from Raj and Karen Aggarwal. Additional support is provided by Anne T. and Donald F. Palmer.

All exhibitions at the Cleveland Museum of Art are underwritten by the CMA Fund for Exhibitions. Principal annual support is provided by Michael Frank and the late Pat Snyder and by the late Roy L. Williams. Major annual support is provided by the Womens Council of the Cleveland Museum of Art. Generous annual support is provided by an anonymous supporter, the late Dick Blum and Harriet Warm, Gary and Katy Brahler, Cynthia and Dale Brogan, Dr. Ben and Julia Brouhard, Brenda and Marshall Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Walter R. Chapman Jr., Richard and Dian Disantis, the Jeffery Wallace Ellis Trust in memory of Lloyd H. Ellis Jr., Leigh and Andy Fabens, the Frankino-Dodero Family Fund for Exhibitions, Janice Hammond and Edward Hemmelgarn, Carl T. Jagatich, Cathy Lincoln, Eva and Rudolf Linnebach, William S. and Margaret F. Lipscomb, Bill and Joyce Litzler, Carl and Lu Anne Morrison, Jeffrey Mostade and Eric Nilson and Varun Shetty, Tim O'Brien and Breck Platner, William J. and Katherine T. O'Neill, Henry Ott-Hansen, the Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation, and Margaret and Loyal Wilson.

Complementary Programming

Artist in the Atrium

Lush Landscapes and Splendid Scenes

Saturday, July 15, 11:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

Ames Family Atrium

Artists in northwest India created immersive paintings that convey the mood of the city's palaces, lakes, and mountains. Draw inspiration from the royal paintings of Udaipur and collaborate with artist and illustrator Santosh Bhandari on creating a large-scale lush landscape filled with fun, fantasy, and your own splendid scenes.

Gallery Talks

Saturday, July 15, 12:00 and 2:00 p.m.

Ames Family Atrium (information desk)

FREE; ticket required

Take a closer look at the exhibitions *A Splendid Land: Paintings from Royal Udaipur* and *Raja Deen Dayal: The King of Indian Photographers*with curators Sonya Rhie Mace and Barbara Tannenbaum during special gallery talks at 12:00 and 2:00 p.m. Tickets are required for the gallery talks.

Ranajit K. Datta Lecture in Indian Art

In the Mood: Place and Plenitude in Udaipur Painting

Saturday, August 26, 2:00 p.m.

Gartner Auditorium

FREE; ticket required

Dr. Debra Diamond, cocurator of *A Splendid Land: Paintings from Royal Udaipur***,** discusses why and how the court painters of Udaipur created a new and spectacular genre of painting in 1700. Her wide-ranging talk addresses the politics of pleasure, while looking closely at how artists combined multiple perspectives, visual puns, and observations from life to evoke moods and memories.

Dr. Diamond is the Elizabeth Moynihan Curator for South and Southeast Asian Art at the National Museum of Asian Art (NMAA) in Washington, DC. In addition to *A Splendid Land: Paintings from Royal Udaipur,* she also recently curated *The Art of Knowing in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Himalayas*, currently on view in the NMAA's Arthur M. Sackler Gallery. A specialist in Indian court painting, her work addresses ecologies, aesthetics, and connections across cultures.

The annual Dr. Ranajit K. Datta Lecture brings nationally and internationally recognized experts in the fields of art history and archaeology to discuss new scholarship, museum exhibitions, and archaeological discoveries in Indian art.

The annual Dr. Ranajit K. Datta Lecture is made possible through the Dr. Ranajit K. Datta in Memory of Kiran P. and S. C. Datta Endowment Fund.

All education programs at the Cleveland Museum of Art are underwritten by the CMA Fund for Education. Major annual support is provided by the Womens Council of the Cleveland Museum of Art. Generous annual support is provided by Brenda and Marshall Brown, Florence Kahane Goodman, Eva and Rudolf Linnebach, and the Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation. Additional annual support is provided by Gail Bowen in memory of Richard L. Bowen, the M. E. and F. J. Callahan Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Walter R. Chapman Jr., Char and Chuck Fowler, the Giant Eagle Foundation, the Logsdon Family Fund for Education, Roy Smith, and the Trilling Family Foundation.

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